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A SYSTEM FOR COMBINING DEVICE COLOR PROFILES

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A SYSTEM FOR COMBINING DEVICE COLOR PROFILES

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is directed to a system that creates a device
5 to device color transform from device to profile connection space transforms for
source and destination devices and, more particularly, a system that uses user
preferences concerning gamut mapping and colorant usage to create additional
transforms that create a correspondence or mapping between dimensions or
coordinates of source and destination device transforms so that they can be
10 combined.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The proliferation of digital imaging devices has created color
reproduction problems. Because each device interprets digital color values
differently, the color appearance of a given digital color specification (in RGB,
15 CMYK, or some other color space) varies from device to device. With the advent
of color management systems, such as the Kodak Color Management System
available from Eastman Kodak Co., this problem has been addressed by storing
information about device color reproduction in "device color profiles" and
defining a device-independent "profile connection space" (PCS) with
20 characteristics based on the properties of human color vision.

When a user wants to take a digital image from some source device
(such as an RGB scanner) and print it on some destination device (such as a
CMYK printer), the color management system (CMS) software converts the RGB
source image into a CMYK destination image in a way that substantially
25 preserves the color appearance of the image. This procedure relies on the
availability of a device color profile (DCP) for both the source and destination
digital color imaging peripheral. The DCPs are stored on the user's computer
system in a file format understood by the CMS. A common file format for DCPs
is that promoted by the International Color Consortium (ICC). An ICC profile for
30 a given imaging device must contain a transform that converts device coordinates
(such as RGB or CMYK) to device-independent PCS values. This transform will
be referred to using the notation [device > PCS] and which can be called a

Current color management systems convert from source device coordinates to destination device coordinates by using the [device > PCS] transform from the source device profile and the [PCS > device] transform from the destination device profile, that is, [device > PCS] \square [PCS > device]. To decrease the amount of time required to process an image from the source space to the destination space, a CMS typically composes or combines the two transforms into a single transform that converts directly from the source device space to the destination device space ([device A > device B]). A method for composition is disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 5,432,906, incorporated by reference herein. This method roughly halves the amount of time it takes to process an image from a source to a destination space.

While the above cited method is very efficient, it does have some potential drawbacks. First, because the PCS must accommodate any device that will be used, the PCS encoding encompasses a larger domain or gamut of colors than any real device, as a result, the [PCS > device] destination transform must compress colors that are outside the color gamut of the given source device. This "gamut compression" problem is difficult and there is no one solution that is ideal for all images or all users. ICC profiles attempt to address this problem by providing four different [PCS > device] transforms or "rendering intents" each with a different gamut compression. However, this still does not always give the user sufficient flexibility in choosing a suitable gamut compression. Furthermore, the "gamut compression" problem is really a "gamut mapping" problem from the source gamut to the destination gamut. Since the destination profile is typically computed without foreknowledge of the source device, the gamut compression technique is typically a generic one that will give typically acceptable results for a range of devices but which is not optimized for any single device.

Another problem with current techniques is that they go through an intermediary color space, the PCS. This offers the advantage of decoupling the

source and destination profiles. It essentially reduces the number of profiles required for M source devices and N destination devices from $M*N$ to $M+N$. However, it can also create problems. Although the transformation from source device space to PCS may retain the color appearance information from the source device, it may lose other desirable information. Sometimes, it is desirable to preserve other aspects of the source device color encoding. One example is the desire that colors at the corners of the source device encoding (such as a pure red with no green or blue [255,0,0]) preserve this relationship in the destination device encoding. Another example is the desire to retain similar black ink usage when converting from one CMYK space to another (known as CMYK re-targeting). This device-specific information is typically discarded by the [device > PCS] transform.

One general approach to solving these problems would be to have the device profiles contain only color measurements from characterization targets produced on or scanned into the device. However, such an approach does not adequately account for the difficulty of producing a high quality [device > PCS] transform. To produce such a transform, one must build a model using the color measurements of the targets and the device code values used to produce the targets. The optimum form of such a model depends on the physics of the device being modeled, and there is not a single mathematical form suitable for all types of devices. Furthermore, if the analytical device model is to be converted into a multi-dimensional interpolation table, one must exercise care in the spacing of the lattice of points in the table so that linear interpolation in the table accurately predicts the analytical model. A much better approach is to have the device profiles contain [device > PCS] interpolation tables (as is, indeed, already commonly done in existing color management systems).

What is needed is a system that will allow a [device > device] transform to be created from a [source device > PCS] transform and a [destination device > PCS] transform.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is an object of the present invention to create a device-to-device transform from device-to-profile-connection-space (PCS) transforms.

It is also an object of the present invention to allow transforms
5 with different dimensions to be combined.

It is another object of the present invention to allow retargeting transforms to be created from the device to connection space transforms.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a method of incorporating more specific user requirements into the process of building a
10 [device > device] transformation, and thereby achieve higher color reproduction quality.

It is also an object of the present invention to incorporate user requirements or preference information such as inking selection and gamut compression into the process of building a device to device transformation.

It is an additional object of the present invention to provide
15 improvements in gamut mapping and in colorant usage.

It is an object of the present invention to also allow for more flexibility in the use of various color adaptation states for the profile connection space (PCS).

The above objects can be attained by a system that uses [device >
20 PCS] transformations for source and destination devices along with user preference information to create a composite [device > device] transformation which is used to convert a color in a source space into a color in a destination space. The system modifies the domain of the [device > PCS] transform from a
25 destination device profile through the use of an ink manifold such that there are three input dimensions. The system also modifies the range of the [device > PCS] transform from a source device profile such that the PCS coordinates are all within the range of the modified destination [device > PCS] transform. The modified destination transform is inverted for values in the source transform
30 range to produce the [device > device] transform. The range of the [device > device] transform can be modified by applying the inking manifold transform to yield coordinates in the range of the destination device.

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These together with other objects and advantages which will be subsequently apparent, reside in the details of construction and operation as more fully hereinafter described and claimed, reference being had to the accompanying drawings forming a part hereof, wherein like numerals refer to like parts throughout.

These and other aspects, objects, features and advantages of the present invention will be more clearly understood and appreciated from a review of the following detailed description of the preferred embodiments and appended claims, and by reference to the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 depicts a system which can perform the processes of the invention to create a device to device transform and convert colors with the resulting device to device transform.

Figure 2 illustrates the operations of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The present invention includes a method for computing a single transform from source device space to destination device space which does not rely upon the [PCS > device] transform from the destination profile. Instead, it uses the [device > PCS] transform from the destination profile along with information about the user's color reproduction preferences. While less efficient than the aforementioned technique using a pre-computed [PCS > device] transform with the composition method described in U.S. Patent No. 5,432,906, the method makes up for this by providing superior color reproduction.

The problem of building a transform from source device coordinates to destination device coordinates is analogous to deciding what destination coordinate best maps to a given source coordinate. The main criteria for making this decision is preservation of color appearance although, as discussed above, there may also be device-dependent considerations. Furthermore, there is the need for gamut mapping to deal with the fact that both devices may represent colors that may not be represented by the other device. For

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transformation using functional composition to yield another [device > PCS]
transform that only contains PCS values within the destination device color
gamut. This transform is a modification of the source device [device > PCS]
transform based on the destination device and user preferences for gamut
5 mapping.

The modified source [device > PCS] transform may be used along
with the modified destination [device > PCS] transform to solve the problem of
determining a transformation from source device to destination device. This is
because the modifications described above cause there to be a unique inverse in
10 the modified destination [device > PCS] transform for every value produced by
the modified source [device > PCS] transform. As a final step, the modified
destination device coordinates are converted back to original destination device
coordinates by applying the inking manifold transformation.

The present invention will now be described in more detail through
15 presentation of a number of illustrations of creating the [source device >
destination device] transform, a discussion of the process used to create the
[source device > destination device] transform and a discussion of the hardware in
which the invention can be implemented.

The present invention can be implemented in a system 8, such as,
20 depicted in figure 1 in which a computer 10, such as, a workstation type
computer, uses a transform 12 to map input color image data 14 from or for a
source device 16, such as, an RGB scanner or CRT, into color output data 18
supplied to a first destination device 20, such as, a CMYK printer or display. The
present invention can also retarget or map input data 22 from a storage device 24
25 which was produced for the first destination device 20 into output data 26 for a
second destination device 28, such as, a CMYK printer that uses different inks
than the first destination device. The computer 10, as will be discussed later
herein in more detail, obtains device to connection space transforms for the source
16 and destination 20 devices and combines them into a device to device
30 transform. The computer 10 can include computer readable storage, such as
RAM, floppy and hard disks, CDs, etc., upon which the process of the present
invention and the transforms used and created can be stored for execution or

distribution. The processes and transforms of the invention can also be distributed over a network, such as, the Internet.

Device color profile formats, such as the ICC format mentioned above, typically represent transformations, such as a [device > device] transformation using a structure involving a series of one-dimensional and multi-dimensional interpolation tables as depicted in figure 1 and described in U.S. Patent No. 5,432,906 or in the ICC Profile Specification from the International Color Consortium. This allows more flexibility than choosing any one type of analytic mathematical model, such as a multi-dimensional polynomial. In the subsequent discussion, it will be assumed that the transforms are represented using a multi-dimensional interpolation table of this sort. Specifically, a transform with N input dimensions (or channels) and M output dimensions (or channels) will typically include a set of N one-dimensional input tables, M N-dimensional grid tables, and M one-dimensional output tables. Also, it will be assumed that the profile connection space (PCS) is an encoding of the CIELAB color space.

In the first example, the source device is an RGB CRT display and the destination device is a CMYK printer. The goal is to build a single multi-dimensional transform that will convert RGB monitor values to CMYK printer values. Device Color Profiles for the two devices are opened or obtained by the software and the two [device > PCS] transforms are read into memory.

To build the [device > device] transform, it is necessary to invert the [device > PCS] transform for the destination device for each point in the source [device > PCS] transform. However, since there are four device channels (C, M, Y, K) and only three PCS channels (L, a, b), the inverse is under-determined (in other words, the solution is not unique). To make the inverse unique, the method described in U.S. Patent No. 5,857,063, may be used. An inking manifold transform is created, using the techniques described in the above-mentioned patent, to map three pseudo-colorant channels (C', M', Y') to the original colorant channels (C, M, Y, K). This transform is functionally composed with the destination [device > PCS] transform to create a modified [device > PCS] transform with three input and output dimensions (and hence a unique inverse).

5 Although the inverse is unique, it may not actually exist for all PCS values contained in the source [device > PCS] transform. This is because the source device may be able to produce some colors that are outside of the color gamut of the destination device. Therefore, the source [device > PCS] transform must be modified so that the inverse both exists and is unique.

It is sometimes convenient to represent the gamut mapping transformation as a [PCS > PCS] interpolation table. The composition of the source [device > PCS] transform with the [PCS > PCS] transform is essentially a modified source device transform where the colors have been mapped to be within the gamut of the specific destination device. Doing this mapping with knowledge of both source and destination device gamuts often gives superior results than using the generic gamut mapping built into a typical [PCS > device] transform from the destination device profile.

The gamut mapping operation ensures that an inverse will exist
30 and the inking manifold ensures that it is unique. Now the modified destination
[device > PCS] transform is inverted for each value in the modified source
[device > PCS] transform interpolation table. This may be done using any of a

variety of well-known methods for inverting a function of several variables, such as the Newton-Raphson method.

The result of the inversion is a [device > device] interpolation table transform that produces modified destination device values [C', M', Y']. By
5 composing the output of this transform with the inking manifold, the modified device values are converted into [C, M, Y, K] values for the destination device. The resultant transform solves the original need for a single transform for converting the monitor RGB values into printer CMYK values. This is done while adhering to user preferences for gamut mapping and black ink usage, as
10 well as substantially preserving color appearance. The resultant transform may be used to process image data and then discarded. Alternatively, it could be saved to a storage device (for example, as an ICC device link profile).

The operations discussed above for the RGB to CMYK device to device transform are preferably done in an order as shown in figure 2 where the
15 user is allowed to select 52 an ink usage strategy which involves choosing values for GCR and TAC. An inking manifold [CMY' > CMYK] is then created 54. The manifold is then composed 56 with the destination device to profile connection space transform [CMYK > PCS]. Then, the user selects 57 a gamut mapping strategy which will map the source gamut to the destination gamut.
20 Note that the user need not be asked each time to do this selection if their preferences are already known. Next, the [PCS > PCS'] gamut mapping transform is generated 58. The transform for the source device to the profile connection space ([CRT RGB > PCS]) is composed 60 with the gamut mapping transform [PCS > PCS']. This modified destination transform is then inverted 62
25 using as input values coordinates of the modified source transform. The output is an inverted transform which is composed 64 with the manifold to create the desired device to device transform [CRT RGB > CMYK].

In the next example, a CMYK re-targeting transform is built. Such a transform converts CMYK values appropriate for a source device into CMYK
30 values for a destination device with different color reproduction properties (for example, using different inks). CMYK re-targeting transforms are of two basic types. They will either replace the black ink usage of the source image with a

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fixed type of UCR/GCR and TAC, or they will preserve whatever black ink usage is present in a given image. Transforms of the first type may be built using the same procedure described above for building a monitor RGB to printer CMYK transform (simply replace the monitor [RGB > PCS] transform with the [CMYK > PCS] transform for the source device). This example shows how to use the invention to build a re-targeting transform of the second type.

The first step is to modify the [CMYK > PCS] transform of the destination device so that it has a unique inverse. This is done by creating a separate inking manifold for each distinct level of black ink in the source transform. Since the interpolation table for the source transform is typically defined over a lattice in the CMYK source space that has between 8 and 32 distinct levels of black, this is not computationally unreasonable. Say there are p distinct levels, then one applies the operations 54 - 64 of the preceding example p times, each with an inking manifold created in operation 54 customized for the given level of black. The inking manifolds are of a very simple structure where $C = C'$, $M = M'$, $Y = Y'$, and K is fixed at the given distinct amount of black from the source transform.

In CMYK retargeting it is often useful to first correct for differences in dot gain between the two process. Thus, instead of preserving the exact amount of black in the source image, this is modified somewhat based on the difference in dot gain for black ink in the two processes such that the amount of source device black ink is replaced with the amount of destination device black ink with the same lightness. This correction may be represented as a one-dimensional look-up table that transforms the p source black levels to p destination black levels (see 54 of figure 2).

The composition of the inking manifold and the destination [device > PCS] transform causes the transform to have a unique inverse. The gamut mapping operation is done as in the previous example. The combination of inking manifold and gamut mapping cause the inverse to exist and be unique. The [CMYK > CMYK] transform is thus built up in p applications of the operations of the previous example.

As described above, an alternative embodiment for this example would invert a single transform with four input and output dimensions rather than p transforms with three input and output dimensions. In this scenario, no inking manifold is used. Rather, an additional output channel is added to both [device > PCS] transforms that simply passes through the amount of black ink (corrected for dot gain). The resulting transforms are $[C,M,Y,K > L,a,b,K']$. In general, the added channel could be any mathematical function of the source device code values (inks) that expresses inking preferences. For example, the added channel could be a function such as $K-\min(C,M,Y)$. This would cause the [device > device] transform to preserve the difference between black and the smallest of cyan, magenta, or yellow (as well as preserving the color appearance). Some care must be taken when choosing more general functions to insure that the resulting problem is invertible.

As another example, a transform is built by combining profiles from a source RGB scanner and a destination RGB monitor where the PCS values are for different viewing environments. Current color management systems typically use the concept of a reference viewing environment to communicate color appearance using color spaces, such as, CIE XYZ or CIE Lab which only describe whether two colors match and not how they appear. Since the changes in the viewing environment alters the appearance of a given XYZ or CIELAB value, current color management systems use a fixed viewing environment for the profile connection space. In this way, a source profile and destination profile may be used without the color management system having to translate colors between potentially different viewing environments.

Using the invention, a high quality [device > device] transform can be built even if the source and destination profiles use PCS values that are not relative to the same viewing environment. As long as the profiles adequately encode the parameters necessary to describe the viewing environment being used, the invention can incorporate the adaptive corrections along with the gamut mapping into the $[PCS > PCS']$ transform which is used to modify the range of the source transform as described above. For example, assume that the PCS values in the source device transform are CIELAB relative a 9300K white point whereas

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PARTS LIST

- 8 system
- 10 computer
- 12 transform
- 14, 22 input data
- 16 source device
- 18, 26 output data
- 20, 28 destination device
- 24 storage device
- 30, 32 one dimensional tables
- 34 multiple dimension tables
- 52-64 computer operations

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